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MR. GRENFELL, MR. FORFEIT,
SIR H. JOHNSTON, MR. GRESHOFF, MR. BELL,
SIR H.-M. STANLEY, MR. HOLLAND,
MR. VAN HEES, MESSRS. ASCENSO AND
POLIDORI, MR. MAGUIRE, MRS. FRENCH-
SHELDON, MAJOR JAMES HARRISON,
DR. CHRISTY, MRS. DOERING, MR. TAYLOR

Reliable Evidence
ON THE
Congo Question

ISSUED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE FEDERATION FOR THE DEFENSE OF BELGIAN INTERESTS ABROAD.

BRUSSELS
NOVEMBER 1904.

H.582

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Port of Leopoldville.

INTRODUCTION

The system of Government in force in the Congo Free State is said to be the source of countless abuse and, it is alleged, necessarily leads to the native being downrightly imposed upon and ill-treated.

If that is the case, how can it be explained that the witnesses, whose names appear below, should affirm that they never noticed any « atrocities » ?

The greater part of these witnesses are Englishmen or Americans; they have travelled and lived in the following portions of the Congo Free State :

Mr. GRENFELL, in the Eastern Province;
Mr. FORFEIT, in the District of the Bangalas;
Sir H. JOHNSTON, on the Congo River, in the region next to the Katanga and in the North-East of the Free State;

Mr. GRESHOFF, in the Free State and in the French Congo (twenty-eight years residence);
Mr. BELL, in the region of the Nile;
Sir H.-M. STANLEY, in the greatest part of the Free State;
Mr. HOLLAND, in the Katanga;
Mr. VAN HEES, at Matadi and Stanleyville;
Messrs. ASCENSO and POLIDORI, in the Katanga;
Mr. MAGUIRE, in the District of Uele;
Mrs. FRENCH-SHELDON, on the Congo River, up to the Stanley-Falls;
Sir JAMES HARRISON, in the Lado enclave and throughout the whole territory of the State, from the upper Nile to Boma;
Dr. CHRISTY, at Leopoldville and down the Congo River from Leopoldville;
Mrs. DOERING resided six years in the Congo; lastly
Mr TAYLOR has for many years been constantly connected with the colonies of the Western coast of Africa and is perfectly acquainted with African questions.

Taken altogether, these testimonies cover nearly the entire territory of the Free State. They refer more particularly to the regions of the upper river and the districts furthest inland and most remote from the western coast of Africa.

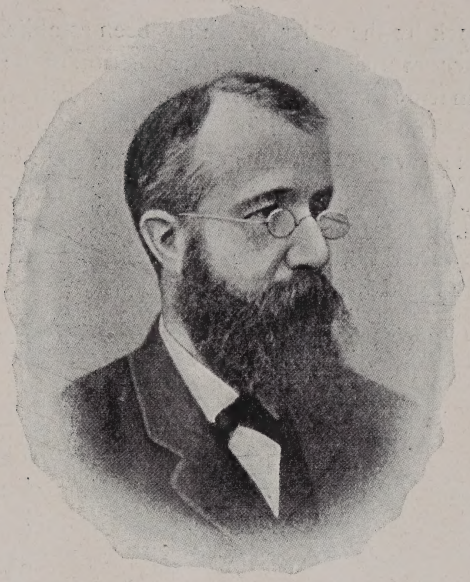
The witnesses mentioned have all made their declarations, either in the course of interviews, or in the shape of newspaper articles, within less than one year and some even within the last few weeks; they are not dependent upon the Congo State: they are of an absolute impartiality. Several are illustrious travellers and men of learning.

It is quite certain that if in a general way continual abuse was committed all over the State, that is to say if the system of administration was bad,—such abuse could

not have escaped the notice of the witnesses referred to or it would at least have been reported to them in the course of their peregrinations.

The following conclusion must therefore be drawn : Either these witnesses are lying or the abuses with which the Congo State is taxed are individual offenses, mistakes of inexperienced officers, local incidents, such as take place in all colonies.

The agents of the Free State are the subject of unjust and passionate attacks, the good faith of a portion of the British public is deceived. Let the reader of these lines select the part he prefers to take : the part of those who are being unfairly accused, or the part of those who, being blinded by passion or victim of inconceivable errors, re-echo ever the same charges which still remain to be proved.



M. Grenfell.
(From the *Congo illustré*, 1892, p. 113.)

I

Testimony of Mr. GRENFELL

AN ENGLISH MISSIONARY

Mr. Sundt, a Swedish officer in the service of the State, sends from Kabambare, under date of the 31st May 1903, the following extract as a translation from a letter which he had received from the Revd Mr. Grenfell while travelling in the Eastern Province:

The welcome that I have received and the facilities accorded me everywhere in the course of my journey through your zone have made this journey very agreeable. This is now the third day that I have received the hospitality of this post, and before leaving it which I expect to do tomorrow morning I consider that I must write and tell you how happy I have been to have had the opportunity of making this most interesting journey. In the course of my tour I have

been much struck by the order which has been established, and by the real progress accomplished. When the position of the country under the Arab domination is recalled, and when the relatively brief number of years since the termination of the military operations rendered necessary by the revolts is taken into account, the progress that has been made is nothing less than marvellous. If in spite of such numerous difficulties so much has been done, I am sure that when the railway towards Ponthierville has been completed the progress will prove more rapid still.

(*Published in the* Etoile belge *of 18th September 1903.*)

II

Testimony of Mr. W. FORFEIT

AN ENGLISH MISSIONARY

Also Mr. William Forfeit, Baptist missionary, wrote under date of the 14th March 1903 to the Commissary General of New-Antwerp :

We arrived today at New-Antwerp in order to take our farewell before leaving for England. I much regret that we are not able to see you. I desire to thank you for the kind interest and consideration for the mission at Upoto which you have always displayed.

The condition of the natives is much improved, all the villages of the district can be visited in absolute safety, and I beg to congratulate you on the tranquillity of the district of which you are the Commissary General.

(*Published in the* Etoile belge *of 18th September 1903.*)

The mess of Uvira (Tanganika).

Sir H. Johnston.
(From the *Uganda Protectorate*, London, 1902)

III

Testimony of Sir Harry JOHNSTON

The *Daily Chronicle* published in its number of the 28th September 1903 an article on the Independent State of the Congo, due to the pen of Sir Harry Johnston.

Our readers are acquainted with the decisive testimony already furnished by Sir H. Johnston in favour of the Independent State in his book : *The Uganda Protectorate.*

This time Sir Harry Johnston comes forward to confirm and complete his deposition by giving on the subject of his statements precise details which increase their import.

The celebrated explorer has been able on three separate occasions to observe for himself how the natives of the Congo are treated, viz. in 1882-3, in 1891-6 and again quite recently in 1900. These statements which cover in some degree the Independent State's whole history relate to the most various parts of its territory.

I was present on the Congo at the birth of the Congo Free State. In 1882-1883, I paid a prolonged visit of eight months to Mr. (now Sir Henry) Stanley. During the course of this visit I travelled up the Congo nearly as far as the point where it crosses the Equator. I came into continual contact with the Belgian officers and officials who had been sent out on the part of the *Comité d'études du Haut-Congo* to assist Mr. Stanley. I may mention that I was « nobody's » man. I paid my own travelling expenses, and had no reason to espouse any one cause more than another. I conceived, however, the highest admiration for Sir Henry Stanley, personally, and for the work he was doing. I convinced myself over and over again by constant cross-examination of the natives of the Congo and of Zanzibaris and Somalis, that Sir Henry Stanley was always just and never cruel, and that the first interests he had at heart were those of the natives of Africa. His memory still lingers in all the regions from the mouth of the Congo to Zanzibar, and any one who doubts the justice of my opinion has only to do as I have done through many years — question the natives as to their impressions of « Bula Matadi » (The Breaker of Stones).

Nor did I at that date see anything to object to in the conduct of the Belgian officers, for many of whom I entertained feelings of warm friendship and esteem. The work of such men as Nilis, Van Gèle, Hanssens, Coquilhat, Braconnier, Janssen and Roger, not to mention many others, was such as no missionary could or did find fault with.

It may be recalled here with interest that Mr. Fox Bourne, who has never seen the Congo, has imputed to Sir H. Stanley the most cruel and blameworthy proceedings.

The second period in the course of which Sir Harry Johnston was able to make personal statements on the subject of the treatment of the natives of the Independent State extends from 1891 to 1896 (except some unimportant interruptions). It may be remarked that the exploitation of the domain lands in the Upper Congo had then already existed some years. The testimony that we are about to quote like a great deal more from others establishes, that this improvement of the land is in no way the cause of abuse and violence. Sir Harry Johnston expresses himself in the following terms :

Subsequently when I returned to the vicinity of those regions as Commissioner for British Central Africa, I came a good deal into contact with the Belgian officers sent to control those countries. I never received any complaints from natives or Europeans at that time which tended to show that the natives were ill-treated by the Belgians.

Finally this is what Sir Harry Johnston says of his third period of personal observations. It will be remarked how extended and conclusive these were :

In 1900, whilst at work in Uganda, I had occasion to visit the adjoining regions of the Congo Free State along and across the Semliki River. In this portion of the Congo Forest (into which my expedition penetrated for about thirty miles west of the Semliki) I questioned many natives — Pygmies, Babira, Bambuba, Lendu, Bakonjo, and Basongora. From none of them did I receive the slightest complaint as regards the treatment they received from the Belgians, and indeed the sight of their villages, plantations and settlements, the fact that they so freely came and talked to the white man, were sufficient to show that they were perfectly content with their present lot. The Belgian and Swedish officers whom I met in this portion of the territory of the Congo Free State were men of the best character. In short, this portion of Congo territory left little to be desired, and in some respects was better organised than the adjoining districts of the British Protectorate. One Musongora chief complained to me that the native soldiers in Belgian employ had taken away some of his wives. He expressed himself so dissatisfied with this treatment that he asked permission to cross over into British territory. That permission was

given him; but when he found that he had to pay the hut tax on Uganda soil he returned to his old quarters. In addition to the foregoing experiences I might say that I took into my employ about this time natives of many districts along the Upper Congo from the country of Bangala on the west to the mouth of the Aruwimi on the east. I did this with the idea of making studies of their languages, and they lived with me for about a year, accompanying me on all my journeys through the Uganda Protectorate. I did not ask the permission of the Belgians to recruit these people, for the very good reason that having apparently complete liberty of action they had walked through the Congo Forest to the British frontier to offer themselves for work. It cannot be said therefore that the Belgians selected people especially to fill my ears with pleasing stories as to Belgian administration. Well, I questioned these natives of villages all along the great northern bend of the Congo. Not one of them had any complaint to make against the Belgians. When I was preparing to leave Uganda to return to England I offered these men (who were accompanied by their wives) plots of land in the Uganda Protectorate; but they were quite decided in wishing to return to their homes on the Upper Congo, and so far as I know they did so, as every facility was given them in that direction. It strikes one then that if these particular people were living under a reign of terror they would hardly have been so eager to return to their homes with the wages they had earned.

It is unnecessary to point out how much this *fact* of the natives wishing to return to their homes gives force to what they declared to Sir Harry Johnston.

There are, no doubt, — again says Sir Harry Johnston — bad Belgians, as there have been bad, cruel and wicked Englishmen and Scotchmen amongst African pioneers. In the early days of African enterprise I have seen too many misdeeds of my own countrymen in Africa to be very keen about denouncing other nations for similar faults.

Sir Harry Johnston does not confine himself to the treatment of the natives, about which subject he possesses an incontestable authority, and he broaches in conclusion the question of concessions.

Here also, — he says, — I am timid about throwing stones. In fact he declares further on : Each Government, in turn, brought

about the existence of chartered companies, who practically secured much the same monopolies of North Borneo, of the Niger, of East Africa and South Central Africa, as have been carved by the King of the Belgians out of the territories of the Congo Free State.

It will be remembered that East Africa is included in the conventional basin of the Congo.

Attempts have been made to weaken the importance of this evidence by alleging that Sir Harry Johnston did not pass a judgment favourable to the Congo State: Mr. Morel, the editor of the *West African Mail*, has not been afraid to advance such a thing. From the above, the reader will be able to judge the debate! Sir H. Johnston, it is true, expressed in a letter published in the *Times* of the 2nd June 1904, various comments in reference to Mr. Consul Casement's Report, to Major Gibbons book, etc We shall certainly not be failing in the respect due to the illustrious traveller if we remark that as to giving an opinion regarding regions which had not been inspected by him, he has no particular authority. It is quite a different thing when Sir H. Johnston reports what he has seen or heard. And in his letter to the *Times*, Sir H. Johnston, far from retracting what he asserted, repeats and confirms his statement.

View of the Port of Leopoldville, taken from Mount Leopold Terrace.

IV

Testimony of Mr. GRESHOFF

A DUTCH MERCHANT

The *Journal de Mons* of the 12th October 1903 published an account of the following interview :

Among the passengers by the *Philippeville* that arrived on Saturday at Antwerp coming from the Congo was Mr. Greshoff, of a Dutch firm having factories in the Belgian Congo and also in the French Congo.

He has lived a little more than twenty-eight years in Africa, and during the whole of this time has taken only three years leave altogether in Europe.

No one can be in a better position than Mr. Greshoff to speak about the work of the Congo Independent State and of the progress accomplished.

What is your impression, our colleague asked, of the administration of the Congo State?

— Evident progress has been accomplished everywhere. The State strives to maintain peace among all peoples inhabiting its vast terri-

.ory. It assures security for traders. Routes, bridges and railways are being constructed in all directions. The work accomplished in a restricted number of years is truly prodigious. In no other part of Africa is there evidence of similar activity, of such sustained energy, and of results so conclusive.

— And the English...?

— What the Burrows, Morrissons, Fox Bournes and those who follow them are doing is a shame for England. I tell you this categorically.

— And what is your impression on the subject of the French Congo? I think you have just made a tour there...

— I have just proceeded as far as Kunde on the borders of German Kamerun. I propose to address a report to the French Colonial Minister and if you will allow me I will not now dwell on the observations that I think it my duty to make. Yet, I may tell you that the interior administration of the country is far from being perfect. The officers have under them only an insufficient military force — scarcely sufficient to assure more or less effectually the collection of the tax.

— The tax?

— On the caoutchouc, naturally, as in the Belgian Congo... And under these conditions the French agents cannot assiduously occupy themselves with the economic organisation of the country.

— And what is your general conclusion?

— The work of the Belgians in Africa has been really remarkable.

V

Testimony of Captain BELL

AN ENGLISH OFFICER

In an article entitled *A Defence of the Congo State*, which is given by an English journal, *Public Opinion*, Captain M. D. Bell criticises with vigour the English campaign. He occupies himself especially with the charges of bad treatment made against Congolese officials, and in this respect his opinion as an eye-witness is particularly interesting and worth quoting.

Personally, — says the English officer, — I have never seen anything approaching to cruelty in the way that the natives are dealt with, and though I have heard many stories both from Europeans and from the natives themselves, I have always regarded these as being exaggerated to say the least of it. On one occasion I remember hearing some very serious allegations made by some missionaries against certain officials in the Uganda province. But on investigation I discovered that the missionaries had merely taken the word of the natives as truth without attempting any real proof, and that the charges were unfounded.

The fact that the missionaries were dissatisfied with the position of the station they held at that time, and had been refused permission to migrate into the Latuko country (a tribe which is not yet settled) may have had something to do with their attitude towards these officials.

For this reason I cannot help thinking that the reports which have reached England may also be exaggerated. They rest for the main part on similar evidence for no one will probably attach much value to the statements made by Captain Guy Burrows.

On the other hand it would not be difficult to find travellers who like myself would vouch for the good condition of the country.

I repeat that I have never seen anything approaching cruelty to the

natives, who seemed to me as happy as any to be found in Africa. It is true that they had to work — some to collect gum, ivory and other valuable products of the country, some as brick-makers and builders, some as gardeners and so on — but they were all paid fairly for their work (mostly in cloth) and they knew that in times of stress or famine, they would be well looked after by the Government.

I have very vivid recollections of a 1st of July (their great anniversary) which I spent at one of their stations. For days before the women had been at work making the native beer, game had been shot, and oxen were killed for the feast. The natives from the villages many miles away came in at early dawn and all day long and most of the night there were races and sports of various kinds, and dances and jollity galore in which the soldiers and civilians, men, women and children, all equally joined, and there was certainly an air of greater prosperity and universal happiness than could be found in any tribe not dominated by European influence.

(*Published in the* Etoile belge *of 21st October 1903.*)

Granite Hills near the Strauch rapids (Uele).

Sir H.-M. Stanley.
Extracted from the *Belgique coloniale*, 1904.

VI

Testimony of Sir H.-M. STANLEY

(Extracted from the Petit Bleu *of 13th November 1903.)*

There is a personage — one of the most competent of all — who had not up to this moment expressed his opinion on the campaign conducted in England against the Belgian Congo; this is the great explorer Stanley — Sir Henry M. Stanley — he who determined the course of the Congo, who knows its smallest turnings, who was the builder of the Free State, whom all the blacks of Central Africa know under the name of Boula Matari.

This was no doubt caused by the fact that the discoverer of Livingstone and the saviour of Emin Pasha has been seriously ill for some time in his country residence at Pirbright.

Stanley now almost completely recovered has lately returned to his London residence in Whitehall, and I have just had the good fortune

to be received by him and to obtain his exact opinion about the attacks of which the Congo State is the object.

I do not believe, — he said to me, — in the charges brought against the Congo, and I do not share the opinions that inspire them. I do not think that any State will be inclined to step in, and to spend the money that Belgium and the King of the Belgians spent to adapt the darkest part of darkest Africa to the interests of commerce. King Leopold lately assigned £ 120,000 a year to the Congo administration. He thereafter gave £ 40,000 and Belgium £ 80,000. Tell me what other country would be ready to do as much?

When I consider the limited number of years which have elapsed since the Congo became a State, I hold that the work which has been accomplished there does great honour to Belgium, and I am certain that not one of the countries who are invited by the newspapers to put itself in its place would have been able to do better.

You can feel certain that the King of the Belgians interests himself personally in the smallest detail of the administration. I do not pretend that he can superintend the acts of each individual, but what Government, what State could do that? But the recitals of atrocities, and of bad administration which have of late been spread about are almost all, if not all, pure reports. Naturally if it is a question of seeking cause for a quarrel there is no difficulty in finding it; but if the Congo of 1885 is compared with the Congo of today, it must be allowed that its progress has been remarkable.

The English Note of the month of August is founded I am convinced on reports stamped with partiality. The assertions of a missionary have been reproduced according to whom the natives flee at the approach of the Congo State officials. They fled before me also when I was there. The mere apparition of a white man, the simple sight of an unusual being or object puts them to flight. That is part of the animal instinct of self-preservation. Whites and blacks always approach one another for the first time with a general sentiment of distrust. Little by little they learn to know one another, and this sentiment disappears.

The Congo was in truth the darkest part of Africa. Today with its forests pierced, and open, its routes, its stations, it is in advance of all other African States. Take the French Congo, German East-Africa, Portuguese West-Africa, and compare them! The Congo State prospers in a greater degree than any other part of the black continent.

The Congo State is accused of employing as soldiers cannibal negroes. When I was on the Congo, and I accused a tribe of cannibalism, it replied : « We are not cannibals, but our neighbours are. »

The neighbouring tribe said : « It is not we, it is the next tribe that you will meet; » and that tribe referred us on to the next and so on continually. They seemed to be ashamed of their cannibalism. They concealed it. Yet there was no doubt as to the existence of this practice. I frequently met with trenches freshly disturbed from which corpses had been taken to be eaten. It was very seldom that I could discover the guilty. How then in recruiting its troops was the Congo State to distinguish the black cannibals from those who are not cannibals?

I am convinced that since I left Africa King Leopold has done his best to prevent all crime on the Congo. But he is no more responsible for the crimes which may be committed there than for those occasionally committed on the soil of Belgium itself. There are on the Congo 300 officials who report to the Governor General, who in his turn addresses a summary of these reports to the King. They discharge their mission under the most difficult conditions, and I believe that I may assert that from the Governor General down to the humblest official there is not one of them guilty of cruelty. Moreover it is for those who speak of atrocities to furnish the proof o them.

Motor-car roads (Eastern Province).

I know by experience what a large number of stories are put forward, then refuted, and afterwards resuscitated year after year. These are legends for travellers. Use is made of them with every change of the wind in Africa. Those who relate them are often the prey of climatic maladies.

The Congo has not the most enviable climate in the world. The maladies contracted there are often debilitating, and things are seen and things are described through the malady, which distorts the *moral* and changes the optic.

I had on the Congo under my orders 300 men, English, Germans, Dutch, Portuguese, Belgians. There were 80 English, but the majority were Belgians. I found no difference between them. All did their best, according to their means. All were in the course of duty the object of some charge. I examined the charges minutely,

and always found them to be without foundation. That did not prevent these stories reaching Banana, and from there Europe. Well, that is what happened on the Congo in my time, that is what is still happening there today.

— But what is the sentiment that inspires these charges against the Congo?

— Jealousy. The Congo is succeeding better than any other State of Africa. And to give a right of way to Congophobe stories forms part of the tactics of its competitors.

— Do you think that the Congo State would be administered better by France, the United States or Germany?

— No, I do not think so. Under French administration the Congo would retrogress. Germany would content itself with fortifying it in a military sense. And commerce does not develop when it is covered with a coat of mail. Germany does not permit and will not permit the English to penetrate into its territory except under certain restrictions. England would not have managed the Congo better than King Leopold has done if she had been mistress of it as she might have become in 1877.

— Do you think that these stories of Congolese atrocities are about to cease?

— No. They will be persisted in with as little foundation as during the time I was there. I crossed Africa from east to west, and from west to east, and I never saw any excesses committed. Yet I once heard some frightful ones recounted which were nothing but pure imagination. One or two examples are the following :

Finding myself at Stanley-Pool the natives came to me to complain of M. X... whom they represented to be an assassin. I went with them and found M. X... He told me that being provoked he had struck a native on the head. The natives ended by admitting the truth of his statement. Another time terrible charges against one of my subordinates, a Swede. I went to the spot where he was to be found. I found him a prisoner tied feet and hands. His sole crime was having had an attack of fever as a consequence of the great heat. The natives having taken him for a being possessed had put him in the state in which I found him. That was his great crime.

In conclusion Sir H. M. Stanley said to me : — « The white man must remain master of the Congo. Drive him out of it; you will see war arise anew between one native village and another, the return to barbarism. It is difficult to govern so vast a territory. And yet in a limited number of years the King of the Belgians has put an end to the horrible Arab slave trade. I do not think that from this point of

view there is a single sovereign living who has done so much for humanity as Leopold II. It was in 1872 that I first saw a caravan of slaves, young men and old, women and girls, a pitiable crowd. Approaching them I asked :

— Why are you chained?

— Because we have been fighting; we have been taken prisoners. Now we are slaves, and they are carrying us off to be sold!

In 1872 that was happening all along the Congo, from its mouth to Nyangwe in the centre. Today that no more happens on a single part of the territory.

Nyangwe! Nyangwe! — murmured the great explorer with the whitened locks assuming the tone of a man in a dream. And he sank in his reverie, dreaming of the great days of the past when he rescued Livingstone abandoned in the desert, without a friend in the midst of every danger...

Such was my interview with Stanley.

Colony of native children at Poma apprenticed carpenters.

VII

Testimony of Mr. Michael HOLLAND

AN ENGLISH PROSPECTOR

(Extracted from the Times *of 25th February 1904.)*

To the Editior of the *Times*.

SIR,

Some attention has of late been directed to ill-treatment of Congo natives by the State officials. I entered Katanga, in the south-east of the Congo Free State, in June, 1901, and remained in that country until May, 1903, except for three months in 1902. I reached Katanga from Tanganyika in charge of a prospecting expedition for the Tanganyika Concessions (Ltd.) and joined Mr. George Grey's expedition from Bulawayo which was working for the same company. Only one post, that of Lukafu, was then established by the Congo State in that part of the country, but since then several posts have been established, and the country now presents a civilized appearance.

I cannot give evidence as to the state of affairs obtaining in the Western or Northern Congo, but I can say that in the Katanga District, which is ruled under State laws by the Katanga Special Committee, the treatment of the native is just.

The local Administration collects rubber and ivory from the natives and pays them for it. I have never heard natives complain of ill-treatment from a white official on account of not bringing rubber or ivory in sufficient quantities, and I have always been on such friendly terms with the chiefs and people that cases of cruelty would have come to my ears.

Isolated cases occurred, and occurred also in both the Rhodesias and the British Central African Protectorate, where black soldiers, travelling through the country without a white official, beat and bullied the natives; but the local authorities in Katanga have issued

orders that no armed party shall travel without a European in charge, and I think that the same regulation holds good in the British spheres. The State soldiers are not quartered on the country, but receive beads or calico wherewith to purchase food.

The science of ruling Central African natives can only be learned by a prolonged stay in Central Africa and a knowledge of some local language. In such a country it is customary that officials should succeed each other at short intervals of from one to two years. Some misgovernment is sure to be caused by the inevitable ignorance of the untried official, as he must depend on native interpreters if he is in charge of a distant district.

I believe that the officials of the Katanga district are doing their best to govern the natives justly, and since the arrival of the Special Committee's officials slave dealing has ceased, and feudal disputes, which had lasted immemorially, are at an end. The country is quite peaceful, and volunteer labour is plentiful.

With a strict control over the black soldiers and continued experience in this huge newly-settled country, I am of opinion that Katanga will compare favourably with the African territory of any other nation.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL HOLLAND

30, Clement's lane, Lombard-street, E. C., Feb. 21.

VIII

Testimony of Mr. E. VAN HEES

(A DUTCH GENTLEMAN)

The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* of the 23rd February 1904 published the following letter :

Libreville, 17th January 1904.

To the Editors of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant,* Rotterdam.

GENTLEMEN,

Your excellent journal published in its « mail edition » *(mail-editie)*, No 87 of 30th October last, a short article entitled *The Congo State*, and information of different kinds concerning the Anglo-Congolese dispute has appeared in other home and foreign papers. I take on this occasion the liberty of begging you to give a place to the following remarks in one of your daily editions :

I have myself lived for two years in the Congo State, and in particular at Matadi and Stanleyville. I have thus been able to ascertain that everything goes on there in a regular fashion, and in conformity with justice. The least infraction, the least injustice committed by a white upon a black is punished, and I think I may say with every confidence that many things are written the truth of which could not be sustained.

Who then spreads the rumour so general of late that in the Independent State the negro is exploited and maltreated? Does not this rumour proceed most often from those who imagine themselves to be put more or less in possession of the facts by some former « Congolese » who has returned to Europe on account of personal difficulties and consequently discontented?

When the relatively small number of whites who have resided in the interior of the State territory and even on the coast is considered,

it is surprising to see how in so many papers, especially in English papers, suspicion is thrown on the civil and military authorities of the Independent State.

And then, about what colonial administration is there not an opening for making observations?

For me, I recall with pleasure the two years that I passed in that colony, and I would go there again very willingly to admire the works on the railway of the Great Lakes, &c. The Belgians, and King Leopold at their head, have taken upon themselves a task which gives them the right to every homage. Honour to whom it is due!

In thanking you for the insertion of the present, I beg you, Gentlemen, &c.

(Signed) EVERARD VAN HEES

Building of a house (Kasai).

IX

Testimony of Messrs. ASCENSO and POLIDORI

ITALIAN PHYSICIANS

The *Belgique coloniale* of the 21st February published under the heading « A sanitary inspection in Katanga » an article from which we extract the following passages The declarations of Messrs. ASCENSO and POLIDORI are a striking testimony to the benefits that the Congo blacks owe to the Belgian administration, and furnish the proof that the Government concerns itself about the sanitary state of the blacks as well as with the comfort of its white agents.

Doctors Ascenso and Polidori, medical officers of the Special Committee, have undertaken according to the instructions of the representative of the Congo Committee the sanitary inspection of the stations of the Committee in Katanga. The question of hygiene on the Congo is primordial and it is necessary to inspect from this point of view the installation of the stations in which the white agents, soldiers and native labourers reside.

We find in the long and interesting reports of these practitioners much information about the installation of the whites at Katanga, and what is not less appreciable very instructive data on the position of the natives who live in the stations or the surrounding villages, that is to say of the blacks who are under the immediate influence of the white man, and who are in constant relationship with him. We glean, a little at haphazard, in the voluminous collection that these reports make up, the following notes. We cannot evidently examine all these documents by each post; it must suffice to speak of some of them.

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After having spoken of the whites, the report on Kabinda speaks of the natives. This part is still more interesting. We, therefore, copy

the whole of it. It is a fresh proof of the benefits that the Belgians have conferred on their black brothers on African territory :

The dwellings for soldiers and labourers are numerous. They are symmetrically arranged and separated from one another by wide alleys from 10 to 15 metres across. Each black family has a separate house sufficiently large, and divided into two rooms. Each dwelling is raised half a metre (nearly 20 inches) above the ground, and surrounded by a verandah 1 metre broad. The soil has been well beaten down, and the walls are whitened with lime. The roofing is without a ceiling with a large opening admitting ventilation; each man sleeps on a bed raised one metre above the ground. The ground surrounding the post is formed into separate small gardens in which each soldier cultivates maize, manioc, &c.

All the villages around Kabinda are united to the post by wide and long avenues well kept up and bordered by trees and pine apples. The natives greatly feel the effects of the neighbourhood of the white, and make every effort to rival him in the maintenance, cleanliness, and prettiness of their villages. The houses are placed on an elevation, and are built in the same way as those of the soldiers with truly remarkable care and propriety. Each house has two or three rooms containing from 12 to 15 cubic metres, with good verandahs, and meets the prescribed hygienic conditions.

Large free intervals separate the dwellings from one another, and in them are the vegetable plantations.

A detail worthy of being pointed out is the great cleanliness of the natives of the region. During the course of my journey from the West coast of Africa to Kabinda I remarked many things, and I ascertained that at Kabinda all the natives in place of sleeping on the ground have a raised bed, formed by means of flexible canes with coverlets, stuffs and mosquito nets. There are houses that contain magnificent sarcophagi of truly artistic work.

Everywhere there are small pieces of furniture coarsely sculptured, but which reveal the artistic taste of this people and their progressive march towards civilisation. It must also be said that they have a marked desire to dress decently. In conclusion they are in my opinion the first people I met in Africa who without being spoilt by money possess a relatively advanced degree of civilisation, and an hygienic system beyond dispute.

The fertility of the soil and the abundance of provisions of all kinds allow of changing the food of the soldier and the native.

The food generally consists of chickens, goats, wild animals, manioc, maize, vegetables and various fruits.

They feel the effects of this good nourishment. They are strong, robust, and support fatigue well, and consequently give little hold to sickness.

On a hill close to the post a hospital has been constructed by the natives. It contains three large rooms separated from each other and containing 100 cubic metres.

The post of Tshofa, situated north east of Kabinda, on the Lomami, near parallel 5th of south latitude, offers quite as comfortable an installation. After speaking of the penetrating charm offered to the traveller by the route from Kabinda to Tshofa (three or four days marching) and vaunting the hospitality and good disposition of the people of that region, Dr. Polidori describes the entry to the post of Tshofa, « which is approached during the last hour of the march by a magnificent village of retired soldiers situated in advance at the commencement of a wide and well kept road, bordered by Persian lilacs, lemon trees and pine apples, and which is traced in almost a straight line to the heart of the station ». Let us also state tha the traveller found at stages on the route large villages where the necessary provision for the natives and for the subsistance of whites could be procured.

. . . . . .

Dr. Polidori also visited the posts of Kisenga, Ankoro, Buli, &c. The general situation was everywhere satisfactory. It attracts especial attention at the station of Buli a model of its kind, an ideal residence from the point of view of comfort and hygiene.

The installation of the agents of the Committee meets all the rules of hygiene, it is the same with that of the natives. The houses of the latter are in pise with verandah, and comprise two well aired rooms one of which contains a bamboo bed with a mosquito net. As to the food, let us quote this passage : « A fine herd of goats supplies every morning fresh milk. Goats, sheep, ducks, chickens, pigeons, fish without including the game that is often brought to the station furnish always fresh provisions in abundance. The food is simple, but very wholesome and varied. The vegetables of Europe proceeding from the kitchen garden, native vegetables, different fruits are in abundance. Use of the preserves from Europe is rarely made. »

. . . . . .

Lukonzolwa possesses a fine and extensive vegetable garden.

The dwellings are new — the station was built by Major Weyns in 1901 — and meet all the hygienic considerations.

As to the installations of the blacks which are very numerous at Lukonzolwa, this is what M. Ascenso says about it : « They are

eighty in number in pise, comfortable, and about 50 cubic metres each. They are well spaced out, 8 metres from each other, and disposed along a long alley 12 metres broad. »

The food of the blacks is composed of maize, manioc, bananas, sweet-batatas and native vegetables.

The doctor caused a hospital to be constructed destined to receive the natives attacked by serious or contagious diseases, and has trained black nurses. « They learnt, » says M. Ascenso, « to know the names and the action of the principal medicines, the use of disinfectants, the bandaging of wounds. »

At Lukonzolwa is established the general staff with the training camp for the police corps of Katanga. As may be seen by the preceding notes, a healthier and more agreeable spot could not have been chosen.

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X

Testimony of Mr. MAGUIRE

AN ENGLISH MISSIONARY

The *Manchester Guardian* published on the 31st March a passage from a letter from Father Maguire who was 1904 attached for several years to the priory of « Corpus Christi », Miles Platting (Manchester) and who is now a missionary in the district of Uelle (Upper Congo). The letter dated from Amadi 1st January 1904 was addressed to a friend in England. The latter communicated to the great English daily the passage which we reproduce below :

Before concluding, I would just mention that, though I have travelled by boat and on foot from Boma to Amadi and higher up to Surunga, calling at all the State stations ; though I have visited many establishments, both Catholic and non-Catholic, as well as some stations of independent companies ; though I have passed nights and days in my tent in the forest and in villages of the natives ; though I have had ample opportunities of seeing much in my journeys as to how the natives are treated, I have never seen or heard of any of the atrocities with which the agents of the Free State are charged. On the contrary, one cannot but admire the wonderful progress that has been made in so short a time, the commendable way in which the natives are treated, the little work that is exacted of them, and the manner in which they are punctually paid for every service rendered or work done. The little work which is occasionally exacted of them by way of tax in porterage or otherwise is as nothing when compared with the immense benefits conferred upon them by the State. In fact the methods of the Belgian officers drew a highly complimentary eulogium from the Sirdar during his recent visit to the Enclave of Lado — methods which, he stated, might be followed with advantage by our English officers : « Messieurs, nous avons d'excellentes leçons devant nos yeux, » said he, — « Gentlemen, these are excellent object-lessons for us. »

XI

Testimony of Mrs. FRENCH-SHELDON

THE ENGLISH TRAVELLER

The following is the conclusion of a letter dated 21st January 1904 which Mrs. French-Sheldon, the courageous English traveller, addressed from Stanley-Falls to Sir A. Jones, and which is published by the review *The African World* in its number for 16th April following :

I believe there is nothing inaccessible to me. My policy has proved successful, and I have been able to interest everyone in my efforts, and have found but few ready to put obstacles in my way. Things are so much better up here than down the Congo. Everyone (the blacks as well) has plenty of good food, are very well housed, and full of activity.

In a second letter dated from Basoko (Aruwimi) the 10th April 1904, and published in the *Liverpool Courrier* of the 30th May 1904, the intrepid Mrs. Sheldon says that :

Some disjointed parts of Mr. Consul Casement's allegations have been received out in the Congo, but not the full text of his Report; she asks that Sir Alfred, the English Government and the nation will not, with mistaken zeal, be swayed by the exceptional cases that may have occurred in the past — cases taken from a limited area of the Congo — but suspend their judgment until they hear of the actual experience of her months of travel in the Congo region. Mrs. French-Sheldon has studied the laws and the administration of them, the natives and the mutual relation between them and their rulers. The Arab slave trade, which was costing the country annually 100,000 native lives, has, Mrs. Sheldon says, been suppressed for the last ten years, and this alone has saved nearly a million lives. The prohibition of the liquor traffic in the area of the Congo Government was another great act, which could not have been accomplished by any

other means. So far as the Domaine Privé is concerned, Mrs. Sheldon thinks it a pity that the whole of Africa is not a Domaine Privé — order, discipline, progress, work. Continuity of purpose, and government tempered with justice and consideration must be maintained. Any change now would be fatal to all the great work that has been accomplished by such sacrifice of life and the expenditure of money, and the natives would lapse back into their former state, or even worse. Mrs Sheldon is filled with profound admiration for the men who were out there working for the country, and for the magnificent fidelity and abnegation of some of the noble men who had, as it were, opened their arteries and were bleeding for the State. Individual men in the companies had committed wrongs, but to make a sweeping denunciation against all men and the Government was unparalleled in the annals of the world...

Happy childhood ! (young Congolese.)
(Stereotype-plate of lieutenant Gilson).

XII

Testimony of Major Sir James HARRISON

(Extracted from the Times *of 10th June 1904.)*

To the Editor of the *Times*.

SIR,

Having just returned from a shooting trip across the Congo Free State from the Nile to Boma, on the West Coast, I naturally feel much interested in the correspondence now going on with regard to that country. As I came down the Congo river a copy of Mr. Casement's report was lent me to read, and I was more than surprised at the contents of a letter written by Lord Cromer, which was inserted as a prelude to the more serious indictment following.

Now, Sir, had this letter been published alone it might not have seemed so serious, but taken in conjunction with what followed it formed a most damaging article.

As my experience of the Government of the Lado Enclave is so entirely opposite to the view taken of it by Lord Cromer, I feel compelled, in fairness to the Belgian officials, to give my views of the country and its Government That I am not alone in discovering so much that is good in the Belgian administration of the Lado Enclave is vouched for by other English officers who have hunted and travelled among the natives beyond the waters west of the Nile.

I assume from Lord Cromer's report, and from what I was told at Lado, that he only landed at the Kiro and Lado stations, so that the greater part of his report must have been founded on information supplied by others, which, besides being often incorrect, might possibly have reference to times gone by, when, I believe, a certain official was promptly dismissed the service for unfair treatment of the natives.

Lord Cromer compares the deserted appearance of the west banks of the Nile with the east bank between Kiro and Lado

My experience of this part was that you could hardly see anything of the west bank, owing to the channel lying well over to the east and endless *sudd* stretching to the west. The reasons for natives not living near the bank I give later on.

Again, Lord Cromer contrasts the peaceful, settled state and the confidence of the tribes under English rule on the Nile as compared with those on Belgian territory; yet within a few months of his visit a whole British force was annihilated on the Bahr el Ghazal, while in the Game Ordinance published last year it stated : « The whole of the left bank of the Nile is at present closed to sportsmen, owing to the unsettled state of the natives. »

Since my return I see yet another British force has been severely handled by the natives. Through the whole of my Congo trip absolutely alone, I wandered about, visiting 50 different tribes and hundreds of villages, armed as a rule with a camera, umbrella, and, at times, a collecting gun. Yet I had no unpleasant experiences ; on the contrary, I was received with kindness far different to any I ever met with when hunting among British African natives.

As I went up the Nile I heard the same stories Lord Cromer did — as to how all the natives were flying across the river from the Belgian country owing, I was told, to ill-treatment. As I spent a month hunting all the district 40 miles inland from Lado and Kiro, looked after by the two big Bari chiefs Kenion and Fariala, I took great interest in learning all I could, and, owing to my capitow talking Arabic, the chiefs' favourite language, I had excellent chances for finding out all I wanted.

To my question as to whether many of their tribes went over the

river, and why, they replied : « A few boys ran away the other side, but mostly bad boys who won't werk. » Asked again, if a few good men went, and, if so, why, they answered : « English pay in money ; some boys, if once had money, like it better than being paid in cloth or beads », but no mention of ill-treatment.

Lord Cromer considers because the native villages happen at these particular posts to be several hours distant, that this is also owing to bad treatment. I wish to point out that the villages must either be right on the Nile bank or inland, where they are, for the whole country between is waterless during four months. Another reason given for not living on the Nile was that in olden days the few who did so were all killed or taken prisoners by the Dervishes ; hence the survivors kept clear of waterways.

Again, there are no sites for villages near the river, as nearly all the banks lying low are covered with marsh and *sudd*, harbouring millions of mosquitoes, whereas a few miles inland there is good water, not a single mosquito, plenty of game, with good grass and tillage land.

When I visited Gondokoro everyone was complaining at having the station on the Nile, instead of a few miles inland, for similar reasons.

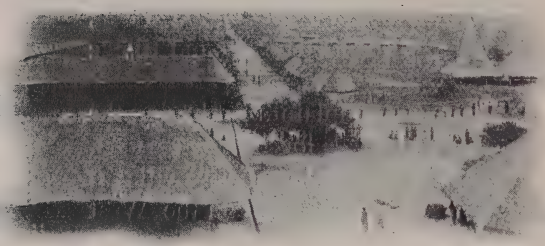
One of the wisest rules of the Congo is not to allow native villages adjoining the posts ; and I hear we are copying the same on the West Coast ; it means a reduction of 75 per cent. in sickness.

That no natives live near Lado arises purely from natural causes. Lord Cromer would find plenty of posts in the interior, with thousands of natives settled as near as they are allowed to.

Another statement, « that the soldiers are allowed full liberty to plunder the natives », is by no means correct. During my journey I saw hundreds of soldiers being sent off on different work — such as postal, Government despatches, fetching in porters &c. ; but not one ever left without having received cloth, beads, or wire sufficient to purchase all necessary food. I quite admit a few of the soldiers helped themselves now and again, and I found the worst sinners in this respect were our own Sierra Leone boys, a number of whom take service in the Congo. Should their acts be reported they are quickly dealt with.

During my trip I must have employed over 1,200 porters. I can only say I never came across a more cheerful, well-disposed set of men. I never had the least trouble with them, though asking them to march 30 and 40 miles a day. How often I thought of my woes and worries in British Central Africa, never knowing how many porters would run away each night, though only marching ten miles a day.

Had all the accounts of ill-treatment and non-payment been true, would men have come in so readily and worked for me as these carriers did? Many an hour at night I used to spend getting them to talk about the country, its ways, and any grievances. I found, naturally, two or three officers who were evidently disliked (no doubt I will be added to that list after our long marches); but, on the other hand, they talked of many officers as their « white fathers ». As for the way in which the Belgians have opened out the country, it is wonderful. The posts are now all well built brick houses, and in a few months' time most of the barracks will be similar; excellent roads connect many of the posts, while all sorts of vegetables and fruit are being grown, cattle and sheep also being introduced in many parts. Though was told in Khartum by several of our officers who had been stationed on the frontier how well the Lado Enclave was run, I was quite astonished at such progress. I am glad to see my views are shared by Major Gibbons and Captain Bell, both of whom have had chance of seeing life inland from the Nile.



A Mission in the Congo.

I met during my wanderings several English and American traders having concessions both in Uganda and the Congo. These men have to visit all the villages. They all said the same thing — that there was nothing wrong with the Government of the Enclave. I also had a long and interesting talk with Father Maguire, of the Roman Catholic mission station at Amadi. He spoke most warmly in praise of the work done by the Belgians in such a few years. He said : — « Think of what this country was only a few years ago, overrun with Dervishes, decimated by the slave-dealers, the natives all cannibals — and now you walk in here with only an umbrella as a protection. »

I can only add that I admire the excellent work being done by such men as Commissioner General George Wtterwulge, Commandants Ravello (Lado), Menwnaer (Redjaf), Wacquez (Buta), Holmes (Dungu), Grazione (Lodka), and all the many other officers, too

numerous to mention, who are quietly working hard, day after day, opening out those vast regions to civilization; and I shall never forget the kindness met with at the hands of all, from the Nile to Boma.

I must apologize for trespassing on your valuable space, but if I were to try and refute many of the statements I have seen in print I should have to trespass considerably more.

Yours truly,
JAMES J. HARRISON,

Bachelors' Club, Piccadilly, June 6.

P. S. — Since writing the above I see in to-day's *Morning Post* quotations from some English trader in Matadi. He says : « From all I hear things up country are worse than ever. In the Mayumbe country, behind Boma even, the State has begun collecting rubber by force from the natives. »

As I happened to travel home on the same boat as Mr. Ave, an American missionary, who has for some years been in charge of this Mayumbe district, his statements to me may be of interest. Mr. Ave said : « All these reports were untrue; that the district was governed by an officer who was most kind and considerate in all his dealings with the natives; that he had carefully readjusted the taxation so as to fall as fairly as possible with regard to villages and population of same; and that the was universally respected by all the natives as a kind and just man. » The same *Morning Post* article seems to be slightly inconsistent. It quotes one Equatorial missionary as saying : « The white man will be swept out of the Congo and that a revolution will take place within two years », while further on it quotes the Matadi trader « as deprecating the founding of a new post for 1,000 soldiers at Bomasundi. »

Surely, if the first assumption is correct, the wisdom of the second is sound. I am glad to find since my return that few people take notice or believe those wonderful statements, copied from a more wonderful paper — the *West African Mail.*

(*Extracted from of the* Morning Post *of the 25th June 1904.*)

To the Editor of the *Morning Post*,

SIR,

Mr. Morel in your paper to-day himself answers the question asked him by others, viz., Why the Congo Reform Association has noticed my statements. If they were incorrect surely his letter would have

Young negroes brought up by the missionaries (Lusambo).

dealt with them, instead of which all he can say is that I am attacking a man of Mr. Casement's standing.

While quite ready to take full responsibility for any letter or interview alluded to by Mr. Morel, I absolutely deny having attacked the character of our Consul in any way, nor did I find in Boma Belgian officers « showering abuse » on him. Like myself they (and most people over here with whom I have discussed it agree) did not think it a wise appointment, and certainly it placed Mr. Casement in an awkward and unenviable position, but after all he would only carry out his orders. But as to the travelling about on a mission steamer I most strongly assert it was a most unfortunate error. It is well known to all natives on which side most of the Protestant and Baptist missionaries are, and to expect them to give contradictory evidence in such circumstances was attributing them with virtues unpossessed. I have noted Mr. Morel places much of the Belgian evidence (say, the

Epondo case) out of court for the selfsame reasons. After the using of a mission steamer I hardly see that any work Mr. Casement might have been interested in originally could make any difference. Still, for his own sake it might be wise if Mr. Morel stated exactly what occupations or duties he was interested in, say, between 1885 and 1900. I trust Mr. Morel in his next letter will deal more fully with my « absurdities » put forward in my letter, and not have to simply try and find an imaginary attack on a gentleman for whom, through mutual friends, I have every respect.

My object in entering this Congo controversy is to try and place before the English public a more broad-minded view of the question, and while making allowances for the well-nigh insuperable difficulties the Congo Government have had to contend with, at the same time try to help on improvements for the future, rather than entirely dwell on the past. I can assure Mr. Morel that I am by no means alone in my « absurd views », but will be supported by others who have lately crossed the whole Congo State, blessed with an open mind. — Yours, &c.

(*s.*) JAMES J. HARRISON

Bachelors' Club, June 24th.

XIII

Testimony of Dr. CHRISTY

AN ENGLISH PHYSICIAN

The *Liverpool Echo* of the 23rd June 1904 publishes the following account of an interview with Dr Christy, who has just returned to England after having been out in the Congo to study the sleeping sickness, on behalf of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

I went out, — he said, — last September as a member of an expedition of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, which was despatched especially to investigate sleeping sickness in the Congo, the same disease which so recently, as the public know, broke out in such virulent epidemic form in Uganda. For a considerable time I was in Leopoldville, which is the Bombay of the Congo — that is, everybody throughout the whole of the Congo goes through Leopoldville in order to reach Europe and the outer world. Hence you can quite understand that anyone, like myself, for instance, stationed for a time in Leopoldville must, if he take any trouble at all, come across all the officials from the whole of the Congo, who, from various causes, are bound at intervals to be in or passing through Leopoldville. Thus, whilst there I had excellent opportunities of finding out exactly what happens in that country, particularly as these men — that is, the officials of the Congo — are extremely ready to talk. Besides opportunities of acquiring information in that way, I have travelled on foot in the Belgian Congo State, and personally observed the condition of things which prevails there. I assure you that if I were to tell you all I know against the Congo Administration it would amount to a very little indeed compared with what I know in its favour. The credulousness of the British Government in respect of the Casement report is something marvellous. Casement travelled up the river in a missionary steamer, arm in arm with missionaries practically all the time, and obtained all his information from the river bank instead

of personally investigating the various stories of outrage and mutilation which he received. It is the most astonishing thing that the British Government have given the Casement report so much credence

Atrocities not likely to recur.

— You think, then, — queried the interviewer, — that there is no complaint to be made of the present administration of the Congo.

— Well, — replied Dr Christy, — I am not prepared to go as far as that, but I do say that the agitation now going on with respect to atrocities in the Congo is based on things that happened a long time ago. There is no doubt that in times gone by atrocities have occurred, but, thanks to the altered methods and conditions of administration, such things are not likely to recur. The basin of the Congo, mainly the Belgian Congo, is practically the sole rubber producing area of the world. This territory also contains the lowest class of native in the whole of Africa. The natives all over the East Coast — the Masai, the Nandi, the Kaverondo, the Bukedi, the Baris, the Madis, the Dinkas, the Shiluks, and others — stretching right away up to the Sudan, are all a magnificent class of negro, a fighting people, a manly upstanding people, who impressed me immensely. I have been through parts of all their territories, and they are indeed a magnificent set of people. Then you get towards the West Coast — the basin of the Niger where I was for nearly two years — and you see a lower class of native. On the Benue, where the present punitive expedition is operating in Nigeria, you have again a distinctly lower class of native. Then, as you go further South, and get into the Congo watershed, you come upon a still lower class of native. The natives over large areas in the Congo are cannibals to the present day. They are a very low class of native indeed. That is the territory which the Belgians have so successfully opened up for the rubber trade. In that opening-up process they have had, as I say, to contend with absolutely the lowest class of natives in Africa at the present day. As you travel through the Congo you cannot help feeling — at all events anyone like myself, who has been through the British tropical colonies — that the amount of general advancement and civilisation in the Congo Free State is far ahead as compared with our own.

An example to British Protectorates.

— To what do you attribute this superiority?

— It is all owing to the fact that the Belgians have made the natives work. The Belgians have gone on the principle, to begin with, that the native must be a participating element in the development and civilisation of the country — that is, that he must work with and for the white man, and thereby benefit not only the white man but himself. I was immensely impressed with the state of government and the advancement and general opening up of the Congo, the more so as I can compare it with other districts under British control in which I have been. We do not attempt to make the native work with the result that we do not get the benefit we should from our Protectorates. Uganda and British East Africa are far behind the Congo Free State. Not more than a third of Uganda is opened up to administrative control. I once spent ten months in Uganda, and visited every station in it, walking 2,300 miles and returning down the Nile. The Belgians have got stations everywhere in the Congo practically, and most of the natives, except in one or two areas, are entirely under control. The Uganda native is a fat, lazy chap, who will do no work. There is no industry in Uganda. The Belgians pay the Congo natives for their labour. They realise that the native is a valuable asset in the country, and treat him accordingly. It is surely obvious that it is not to the interest of the Congo administrators to maim the native.

Past cruelties.

— How do you account for such atrocities as are said to have taken place in the past?

— All the mutilations and cruelties which have been spoken of took place in the early days of the opening-up process to which the country has been subjected and before the railway was constructed. The men who have been guilty of the atrocities have not been Belgians in all cases. In many instances they have been Italians who have been appointed to the smaller outlying posts, the better and higher positions being kept for Belgians. These Italians and other foreigners who have been given the charge of outlying stations have in some cases perpetrated cruelties in time gone by. These men were not accustomed to exercise power, and this led them to ill-use the natives. That is how the atrocities such as these were originated. But that has all gone now; they are all cleared out. I have seen nineteen of

such men, chiefly Italians, in prison at Boma on charges of cruelty, which proves that the Belgians are doing their best to put a stop to the kind of thing complained of. The agitation that is now going on about atrocities is exaggerated out of all proportion to the amount of the atrocities that happened at any time. The Belgians are doing everything they can to supersede the men who have acted improperly in the past; they have appointed inspectors for different districts, and they have allowed inspectors appointed by the Italian Government and the Scandinavian Government to go out into the Congo for the purpose of keeping an eye on those of their own nationality in positions of responsibility and control in the Congo Free State. Things in the Congo now are very different to what they were even two or three years ago. The King of the Belgians has sent out Baron Dhanis — who had more to do with opening up the Congo in the early days than anybody else — to reorganise the whole military system of the Congo Free State. There are to be two or three large military centres in the Congo, and the soldiers will be much more highly trained and be more under control. Hitherto the small posts have recruited men from the surrounding villages, and given them a bit of uniform and a rifle, and they have gone about, supposed to be doing their duty, instead of which they have probably been ill-treating the natives. The whole thing will be changed now, however, for they will have a much more highly-organised army and a much higher class of officer. It has been these unscrupulous foreigners — Italians, &c. — who have been guilty of the cruelties reported. Another proof of the endeavours to stop any existing abuses of administration is the fact that a Belgian officer who for many years held a high post in the Congo has recently been sent out by the King as Royal High Commissioner, to investigate all questions of maladministration and, particularly, payment of State employes and the natives for labour, with power there and then to rectify or alter any existing rules which he thinks might be amended in any part of the Congo, the territories of concessionary companies included. With regard to the mutilations in the Congo, described by Mr. Casement, I may tell you that only last year in Uganda I saw similar mutilations, which, it is well known, were done by the natives in Uganda, notably on King Mtesa's day. In walking through Toro and Unyoro, I have seen men without noses, ears, and, frequently, without hands.

Lord Cromer's assertion.

What is your opinion about Lord Cromer's assertion with regard to the Lado Enclave, to the effect that the natives have left the banks of the river and the immediate regions of the Belgian posts?

— Well I have walked along the Nile from the Albert Nyanza into the Sudan, and visited the Belgian stations on the river, besides having seen a good deal of the natives on both banks. I feel sure that Lord Cromer is wrong when he states that the natives are leaving the Belgian side and going over to the Uganda side. The natives certainly had nothing to complain of, and certainly are not migrating across the river. As for there being no villages round Lado Enclave the explanation is that there is for several months of the year absolutely no water and, therefore, necessarily no villages. But at many other places along the banks in the Lado Enclave there are large villages. I saw several thousand natives at Wadelai, employed by the Belgians in rebuilding the old fort of Emin Pasha, preparatory to making a large station there, and they seemed quite contented and happy, and worked like a hive of bees. The conclusion to which I am irresistibly driven as a disinterested observer is that the present administration of the Congo is not only free from cruelties, but is of the most complete and efficient description, and counts for the fullest commercial and industrial development of the Free State. I am sure that that administration is doing its level best in every way, from the highest to the lowest officer, to make the country prosperous, and the native happy and useful.

Happy childhood ! (young Congolese). (Stereotype-plate of lieutenant Gilson.)

XIV

Testimony of Mrs. DOERING

AN AMERICAN LADY MISSIONARY

Among the passengers who arrived at Antwerp on board the *Léopoldville* on the 12th June, was Mrs. Doering, an American lady missionary who has spent six years in the Congo.

On being questioned by one of our contemporaries as to the stories connected with atrocities charged against the Congo Free State, Mrs. Doering replied :

Never have I, for my part, seen any kind of atrocities committed : I did meet English and American missionaries who spoke about atrocities committed, but personally I never saw any committed.

As for the Belgian officers, I can only speak most highly of them and I always noticed they were very kind to the natives.

Mrs. Doering's testimony well deserves to be recorded.

(Published in the Journal de Bruxelles *of 15th June 1904.)*

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Testimony of Mr. TAYLOR

AN ENGLISH MERCHANT

In conclusion, we will quote the following letter from Mr. Walter C. Taylor, published in the *Liverpool Daily Post* of the 12th July 1904. Whilst the English public for the most part are accepting, with too much credulousness, the fables spread about respecting the administration of the Free State, it is comforting to notice that English common-sense is not losing its rights. Mr. Taylor's language is that of reason itself and his words have all the more weight as Mr. Taylor has for many years been carrying on a large business in Western Africa, and he is, therefore, thoroughly acquainted with the country he speaks about.

This is not the first time we have had atrocity scares carried like a flaming torch through the land, and it is as well, when such war cries are attempted to be raised, that the British public should keep their heads cool and level.

It is quite true that traders at present are only established in the Lower Congo, but the Congo Free State runs back some 1,000 or more miles, and out of this distance European traders have penetrated nearly up to Stanley Pool, somewhere about 250 miles from the coast. The natives in the interior of Congo Land are supplied with their European requirements in the same manner as other part of the coast, by native caravans coming down from the interior to the nearest trading stations. News travels rapidly in an inexplicable manner in Africa through the natives, and if all these atrocities were going on amongst them is it not most likely that, sooner or later, the news would get down to the trading factories? How can you get the contents of a bottle out except through the neck unless you break it? In the same

way news must come from the interior of the Congo through the various ports, in the absence of direct telegraphic or postal facilities.

Another point. On its eastern boundaries the Congo Free State is touched by no less than three British colonies, namely, British Central Africa, British East Africa and the Sudan. Then, on its other frontiers, it is bounded by German French and Portuguese colonies. Notwithstanding all this, we have no confirmation of this terrible state of affairs, only some general remarks of Lord Cromer as to the prosperity of the British side of a river, but that, of course, is only natural

A team at Kasongo (Eastern Province).

As regards the missionaries, I should like the public to be informed how many there are in the interior of the Congo Free State above Stanley Pool, and whether there are any stationed beyond Bolombo. This place is situated near the frontier of French Congo. Would Mr. Hold mind telling us if his agents have ever heard reports from the natives of the terrible doings? Whilst I believe there are only a few Protestant missionaries in the Congo field, on the other hand, there are hundreds of Roman Catholic missionaries of both sexes, who are doing marvellous good works in the way of educating the people to use both their hands and heads. Is it not wonderful that nothing is heard from them about the atrocities, notwithstanding the fact that there exists in Belgium a strong party which is against taking over the Congo as a Belgian colony. Surely these Catholic missionaries, who must have family relations all over the Continent to whom they constantly write, cannot be unanimous in maintaining silence at the expense of their principles, and although I am a Protestant myself my experience of missionaries is that the Catholics go about their work in a much more practical and less ostentatious manner than the Protestants do.

The reason why traders do not go inland applies all over the coast —namely, the want of transit arrangements other than the oldfashioned caravan system, which is performed by the native traders much better

than Europeans possibly could do. Why is it that in British colonies where we have been for over a century that white traders have also not penetrated into the interior? To mention one place well known to the public — Coomassie — how many white traders are there to-day, and yet it is not much more than 100 miles inland? How many white traders are in the city of Benin to-day, which is not 50 miles inland? As for « desolate homes » in the Congo, this is a very touching expression, and appeals no doubt no one's emotion, but if you want to find desolate homes why go out of Liverpool, where you will find plenty of homes desolated by the action of rapacious individuals? For this purpose we need not travel even so far as the British colonies. Forced labour is, no doubt, bad for any country, but has England even got a Divine right to go abroad and take the natives' land, put on hut taxes, &c., and compel natives to pay for a so-called « civilisation » thrust upon him, which probably he does not desire?

In reference to the recent law case in London, the judge indignantly refused to allow further time, because, in his opinion, the defendant had already received ample time for obtaining evidence to prove his case, and had neglected to do so. Those who study photography a little will, I think, find out that cameras can be manipulated by an expert photographer to tell as big an untruth as a human being can. As for Mr. Casement's report, I did not say that Mr. Casement was sent out by the Government which positive orders to verify these charges. I simply said that I traversed Mr. Stuart's remark that he must be an absolutely unprejudiced person. He went up, I believe, in the mission boat as far as Bolombo, some 250 miles above Stanley Pool. Why is it that the authors of the most of these reports always write books about them which they sell to the public, instead of making representations to our Foreign Office? Furthermore, I cannot conceive how a Britisher, who has any regard for himself or his nationality, could remain one day in the service of the Congo Free State and see these atrocities committed around him. Would he not, if he were a man, at once throw up his position, and come away home and report it to the British Government? But, instead of this, he continues to receive the pay of the Congo Free State, serves his time, and then comes home and writes a book.

What is the army which King Leopold retains in the Congo? I do not know the figures for certain, but I venture to say that there are not 200 white men in it, and most of these would be officers. The rank and file are natives of the Congo, and I do not suppose there are 5,000 of these. This has to control the population of 750,000 square miles! It will be admitted by any fairminded person that the people

could without doubt, if they felt so inclined, massacre the whole army of the State; and is it not probable that they would do so if they were labouring under such a reign of terror?

Would it conduce to the future lawful obedience of the Congolese to have the Government placed upon public trial right in the midst of their subjects? Would it not rather tend in the future to make a reign of terror necessary in order to enforce any government whatever? How should we like Germany for instance, to insist upon an International Commission to try all the complaints that are, and have been, made against the British Government in Ireland? I think a much better plan would be to accept the Congo State's proposal to hold an inquiry themselves, the guaranteeing indemnity to all witnesses that are produced. The signatory Powers should be represented by barristers sent out from Europe, who at the inquiry would have the right of bringing forward evidence and cross-examining witnesses. Then we should arrive at some reliable evidence.